

**CALHOUN COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
POLICY STATEMENT**

SUBJECT	DATE APPROVED	EFFECTIVE	POLICY NO.
WORKPLACE VIOLENCE	7/1/04	7/11/04	290
		REPLACES	
		NEW	

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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: The County of Calhoun recognizes the need to provide for the safety and security of all employees and visitors. In doing so, the County is complying with Section 5(a), the Federal Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 (OSHA). Therefore, the County will not tolerate threats, threatening behavior, or acts of violence against employees, visitors, guests, or other individuals by anyone on the County's property. This includes physical attacks, verbal or physical threats, destruction of property, intimidation, or abusive language. Sexual harassment is not covered under this policy unless such harassment also involves acts of threats of violence.

AUTHORITY: The Calhoun County Board of Commissioners

RESPONSIBILITY : The Office of the County Administrator/Controller shall be responsible for the implementation and administration of this policy.

DEFINITIONS:

Workplace Violence is any physical assault, threatening behavior or verbal abuse occurring in the work setting. Workplace violence includes but is not limited to beatings, stabbings, suicides, shootings, rapes, near suicides, psychological traumas such as threats, obscene phone calls, an intimidating presence, and harassment of any nature such as stalking or verbal abuse.

Threat is the expression of an intent to cause physical or mental harm. An expression constitutes a threat without regard as to whether the party communicating the threat has the present ability to carry it out and without regard as to whether the expression is contingent, conditional or future.

Physical Attack is unwanted or hostile physical contact including but not limited to, hitting, fighting, pushing, shoving, biting, spitting, throwing objects or other offensive touching.

Property Damage is intentional damage to property which includes property owned by the County, County employees, visitors or vendors.

POLICY: The County supports the prevention of workplace violence. Prevention efforts include, but are not limited to, informing employees of this policy, instructing employees regarding the dangers of workplace violence, communicating the sanctions imposed for violating this policy and

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providing a reporting procedure to report incidents of violence without fear or reprisal.

It is a violation of this policy to engage in any act of workplace violence, except for law enforcement personnel as authorized by law and within the confines of the law enforcement agency policies. No employee or third party, excluding law enforcement and County authorized personnel, is permitted to bring weapons or firearms into the workplace, or onto the County's property, or within County vehicles.

Any person who, in the opinion of the immediate supervisor (elected officials, directors, department heads or their designated staff members), poses a threat to himself or others shall be removed from the premises and shall remain off the County's premises pending the outcome of an investigation. Such removal of any employee will be immediately reviewed by County Administration as identified in this policy.

The County will initiate an appropriate response which may include, but is not limited to, reassignment of job duties, suspension or termination of employment, suspension and/or termination of any business relationship, and/or criminal prosecution of the person or persons involved.

EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITY: Employees will be given a copy of this policy along with an explanation of how it is to be implemented, such as how to report incidents of violence, what to do if the employee is threatened and/or if an incident of violence actually takes place. This policy will be reviewed with new employees during orientation.

In the workplace, an employee witnessing violence directed against another or him/herself shall call a supervisor or 911, depending on the situation. The employee should also observe the situation and attempt to get information such as the name and description of the perpetrator, but only if it can be done without endangering the employee or others.

Any employee having knowledge of workplace violence involving any other employee (as victim or perpetrator) must report such an act to a supervisor immediately. Disciplinary action may result if the employee having knowledge of a suspected violent act fails to report the episode.

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All employees who apply for or obtain a protective or restraining order which lists the County's property or County's facilities as being protected areas must provide this information to the director of his/her department. The Director must report this information to the Sheriff Department.

The County and its employees shall cooperate fully with police and other law enforcement officials in the investigation and prosecution of violent acts. The County understands the sensitivity and confidentiality of the information requested, and recognizes and will respect the privacy of the reporting employee(s) to the extent authorized by law.

All employees should openly communicate with each other to be aware of any unusual activity that may identify the potential for or actual occurrence of workplace violence. Recommendations for improved safety often come from suggestions from employees. These suggestions are encouraged and may be channeled through supervisors or County Administration.

Employees are expected to assist the general public and fellow employees in a courteous manner, but not subject themselves to abusive conduct if confronted by a distraught, harassing or abusively angry person or a person threatening bodily harm.

If an employee feels that he/she or another person is threatened, and in danger or imminent bodily harm the employee should attempt to leave the scene, if it can be done safely. If the supervisor is not aware of the situation, the employee must notify the supervisor as soon as it can be done safely. If the situation warrants, the appropriate law enforcement agency must be notified.

Each incident of violent behavior, whether committed by another employee or an external individual, must be reported to the director of his/her department. The department director will assess and investigate the incident and determine the appropriate action to be taken. County Administration must be informed of all reported incidents of workplace violence on using the form titled, Report for Threats or Incidents of Violence. In critical incidents, in which serious threat or injury occurs, emergency responders such as Public Safety (Police/Fire) and/or ambulance personnel must be notified immediately.

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SUMMARY: This policy is established for the benefit of all employees and visitors to ensure a safe workplace. Any questions regarding this policy or violence in the workplace should be directed to the County Administrator/Controller. This policy and included procedures apply in all situations except where an existing specific policy is in effect.

REPORT FOR THREATS OR INCIDENTS OF VIOLENCE SEE APPENDIX NO. 17